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INDIAN SONGS AND MUSIC.

INDIAN music, and in fact all music, can be studied in two ways, — psychically, as an expression of feeling in melodic form, or mechanically, from the standpoint of physics. This latter method of investigation may yield returns of scientific interest and value, but it deals only with the dissection of the body of the song, while that which was its sole excuse for being, the utterance of an emotion in the heart of man, appealing to some other human heart, will escape the instruments which may exactly record the vibrations and the deviations from a standard pitch. Leaving this physical side of Indian music to others, we turn to its psychical aspects to seek what they may tell us concerning the development of emotional expression.

The tribes whose music we are to consider dwell between the great lakes and the Pacific Ocean north of the fortieth parallel. As none of these tribes can be regarded as types of primitive man, their songs cannot, strictly speaking, be accepted as examples of primitive music, but as the product of a people a long way removed from the simplicity which the theory of evolution suggests as characteristic of primitive men.

INSTRUMENTS.

The only instruments known to these tribes were the drum, the rattle, and a kind of flageolet.

The drum and rattle were used in accompanying the voice, to accentuate the rhythm, and to assist in interpreting the emotive impulse of the song. Shaking the rattle and beating the drum with clear, sharp strokes served not only to mark the time, but to secure the coördination and unity of movement of the numerous voices in the choral, or to enforce precision of motion in the dance. The tremolo of the drum or rattle was to express the awe and trepidation felt when approaching the supernatural, or when invoking the aid of the occult powers.

The flageolet was a rather rude instrument, having a range limited to eight or ten notes in the treble clef. Owing to the lack of

mechanical accuracy in its manufacture, this range varied with every instrument, as did also the quality and value of the tone relations. There seems to have been only one requirement of the maker; namely, that, when the flageolet was blown with all the six holes stopped, there should be strong vibrations in the tone produced. This instrument was used exclusively for solos by the young men of the tribe, and, in spite of the inaccuracies of pitch arising from its imperfect construction, some of the melodies composed for it are not without hints of beauty.

ABSENCE OF THEORY OF MUSIC.

The Indians we are considering had no theory of music, and, so far as is yet known, there are no peoples possessing such theory who have not been indebted to musical instruments for the means of working it out. It would seem that during the long period when the human voice was the sole means of musical expression, before the evolution of instruments which would require an objective treatment of music, the mind of man was not stimulated to make observations upon the relations of one tone to another. The man may be said to have possessed no conscious method, to have made or followed no artificial rules in the composition of his songs.

There are various speculations as to how man first came to sing, as well as to the character of his earliest songs. Unfortunately we are as yet without data to determine the question, but we have definite material for the investigation of man's singing before any theory of music could possibly have been formulated. Nothing goes to show that these Indians had yet treated any subject analytically, and until facts are so treated, no synthesis, which must underlie a theory, can be arrived at. It is because these Indian songs are entirely uninfluenced by any theory of acoustics, or rules of composition, that they are of value to the student of music, and to the student of man.

SONGS AND WORDS.

It is difficult for us to think of vocal music as separate from words. We are accustomed to lean upon the words more than upon the melody for an understanding of the feeling to be interpreted. The meaning of the words of a song may be amplified or emphasized by the melody; still, to us, the music is an accompaniment rather than a vital part of the song, and it does not offend our ear or disturb our thought to have the same tune applied to very different stanzas in a hymn or ballad. The Indian had a sense of musical fitness which did not permit this transference; when he used words at all, there was in his mind so close a correspondence between the idea they conveyed and the music, that he could not tolerate a divorcement

and a new combination. The rituals sung in his various ceremonies were no exception to this rule. The music so universal in the Indian's rites and ceremonies was no mere embellishment, but an actual expression of emotions he was unable to define intellectually ; and that these emotions were not altogether vague is indicated by the fact that he never separated his melody from its original subject, that he never applied one tune to two distinct themes.

SONGS WITH VOCABLES.

Many of the Indian songs were entirely without words, vocables being used to float the voice ; these, when once set to a song, were never changed, but their order was preserved as carefully as if they had been actual words representing ideas. They were not fragments of words, archaic or otherwise, but were a primitive attempt to give an intellectual definition to the emotion of the song, for we see, when classifying the songs, a defining significance in the use of the vocables. They are all vowel sounds with the initial h, dh, or y ; and while a desire for euphony has evidently directed the choice and arrangement of these vocables, the definite feeling to be expressed has controlled the selection of the initial letter.

Songs expressive of the gentle emotions, or which sought to reach the mysterious supernatural powers, had flowing or breathing aspirate syllables, as he, ha, hi, a-dhe, a-dhi.

In courtship songs the lover breathed his sentiments in sighing vocables : —

Hi-dha ho ha hi-a he-ha he !
Hi-a he !

No words interpreted the funeral song, breathing vocables alone carried the voice : —

I-ah dha-ha ah-i dha-he ah-ha ha-ah !

The *We-ton-wa-an* were a class of songs composed and sung by women to carry their telepathic power to the absent warrior to give him strength and victory in the stress of battle. These songs possessed a few words, but their burden was carried by aspirant vocables, as : —

Hi-ah i-dha-e hi dhe dhe,
Hi-ah i-dha-e ha ah e !

When the Indian wished to represent action and power in songs descriptive of strength or valor, or when warlike feeling was to be excited, he used the explosive syllables, ya, yi, yii, yaw, as in the *Mi-ka-thi* songs, sung when men were about to enter battle. Twenty-five out of the twenty-nine measures of one of these songs are supplied with vocables, thus : —

Hi-a ha-a ha i-yaw i-yaw i-yaw !
Ha ! i-yaw !

It will be noticed that there are a few breathing vocables introduced, which by their position indicate the warrior's appeal to the supernatural.

Numerous other examples could be cited to prove that the vocables occupied with the Indian an intermediate defining position between his emotion and its completed expression in words.

In songs which have words, we find these words frequently bent, stretched, or taken apart, and vocables interposed or added to meet the exigencies of rhythm, or to produce dramatic effect, but in every instance the selection of the syllables is in accordance with the principle already noticed. From this manipulation, we can see how the mind might gradually be led up to thinking in metric verse. The Omahas did not actually attain to this form of expression, but they came very near it in some of their songs.

PECULIARITIES OF INDIAN SINGING.

It will be well to mention in this place some of the peculiarities of Indian singing, for unless one masters these peculiarities at the outset, he will fail to recognize any music in the sounds which fall upon his ear. His conventual training would make it exceedingly difficult to follow, much less to grasp, the significance of such unfamiliar tones. It is only after careful and protracted study in listening that one can acquire the ability to analyze the tones, to judge them correctly as to their intent, and finally to be able to record them accurately. The accentuation of these peculiarities can be traced to the Indian's habits in singing.

It is generally in the open air, to the accompaniment of percussion instruments, that he sings. This tends to strain the voice, to injure its sweetness of tone and mobility of expression. There is consequently little attempt to render piano or forte passages, to swell, or to diminish a tone, although this is sometimes observed in solos sung without the drum accompaniment, and more particularly in the love songs.

The Indian enjoys the effect produced by vibrations of the voice, and he employs this tremolo to express various emotions. In the love song it betrays his sentimental agitation; in the *Mi-ka-thi*, or wolf song, it is so managed as to convey the picture of the wolf trotting or loping over the prairie; and in the song of thanks, sung when receiving the gift of a horse, the tones are broken and jarred as if the singer were riding the galloping animal; the same song sung in response to the gift of a blanket would be without the tremolo. In some of the songs addressed to the mysterious powers, the vibrations approximate a trill, expressive of religious fervor.

It is well known that every language has its own rhythm and tone,

and the trend of our musical training has been to lift the singing tone out of the natural tone of language, so that we clearly recognize both a singing and a speaking voice. The Indian has not thus clearly differentiated; he retains in his song the gliding characteristics of his speech. The absence of any mechanism for determining pitch, which would have taught him to treat his tones objectively, may account for this marked peculiarity, as well as for the fact that an Indian song has no established key, but is started and sung within the natural range of the singer's voice. The sequence, however, of its graduated intervals is observed by all singers without any material variation.

DOES THE INDIAN USE A MINUTELY DIVIDED SCALE?

The Indian's lack of differentiation between the singing and speaking voice has led to the widespread belief that he used a minutely divided scale, a belief shared by the writer during the early years of her study of Indian music. In order to record these intervals, she adopted a series of signs to indicate a comma here or there, as the singer deviated from our scale. As a result she had about as many records of a song as the singers numbered who sang it, but on comparing these records with each other the clear outline of the melody all were trying to sing became discernible. After many such experiments it did not seem probable that the aberrations of pitch were intentional, but were for the most part the result of the constant use of the portamento, or gliding of the voice. Under the impulse of this conjecture, the singing of familiar tunes by untutored persons of our own race was noted, when it was discovered that they slurred from one note to another, singing intervals with as little accuracy as the Indians. This fact lent weight to the probability that the Indian was not aware of any peculiar lack of nicety in his pitch and intervals, which view was strengthened by observing that the best singers in the tribe, those whom the Indians paid for their services, sang with greater precision of interval and clearness of tone, coming surprisingly near our own standards; and, moreover, that better tones were produced when a number of Indians sang together than in solo singing, where there was no opportunity for one voice to correct itself by another. Numberless experiments convinced the writer, and later her associate, Professor J. C. Fillmore, that the Indian sang in tones and intervals which approximated closely our diatonic scale, and that aberrations of pitch and tone formed no part of his intent. To record these deviations as part of the song itself would be to record blemishes that were variable, incidental, and no integral part of the composition. Eighteen years of study has failed to offer evidence that the Indian sings in a minutely divided scale, while

experience has shown that when his songs were stretched upon such a scale they were unrecognized by him.

ACCURACY IN TRANSMISSION.

There are two generally received opinions concerning Indian songs, — that they are improvised, and forgotten after they have once been rendered ; or that, even if the same song is attempted twice, it is subject to variation, intentional or otherwise. The extended observation of many years among many tribes has failed to prove these suppositions. On the contrary, the writer has heard the same song again and again sung by different Indians, and has been unable to detect any variation. Within the past few years this aural observation has been verified by the mechanical help of the graphophone.

Songs have been recorded upon graphophone cylinders which fourteen years previously the writer had transcribed from the singing of the Indian, and an examination of these duplicated songs shows a complete agreement. The writer's original notes of two of these songs were verified and revised for publication by Prof. John Comfort Fillmore in 1891 ; they are Nos. 70 and 71 in the monograph on Omaha Indian Music issued by the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, in 1893. A careful comparison of the published transcription with the graphophone record taken in 1895 does not show the difference of a thirty-second note. The correspondence of the song transcribed from the ear, with that recorded on the machine, becomes more valuable as proof of the permanence of Indian songs, when we consider that the two records were taken from two different sets of singers, and many years apart in time.

Early in 1896 additional proof was obtained in the following manner : The writer had brought an old Ponka Indian east to assist her in certain investigations she was making. One day, as he sat by the window in her study, she heard him hum one of these songs, No. 71. As soon as he had finished the song, she asked him to sing it into the graphophone, and he willingly complied with the request. Comparing the record of the song as he sang it with the printed transcription in the monograph, the only difference was found to be the lengthening by an eighth of two rests, where the old man had taken his breath. In reply to the writer's questions, it was ascertained that the old man had learned the song among the Omahas when he was a lad. As he was over seventy years of age, he must have acquired the song more than fifty years ago.

These are the first mechanical proofs offered as to the accurate transmission of Indian songs. It is very unlikely that these songs are the only ones which have been so carefully preserved. They are not sacred, nor was any unusual care bestowed upon their transmittal.

They may therefore be taken as instances illustrative of the Indian's general accuracy in learning and remembering his songs.

This precision may have been stimulated by certain tribal customs ; for instance, the ridicule which invariably followed an incorrect rendition, or, as in certain societies, where a mistake in singing was punished by the imposition of a fine.

In some of the societies there was an office of "Keeper of Songs," which was always filled by good singers with retentive memories, who not only led the singing at the stated meetings of the members, but were charged with the duty of accurately transmitting the songs.

Great care was taken in the training of hereditary priests, who must be able to sing the various rituals confided to them with ceremonial accuracy, since upon their faithful rendition depended their power to secure supernatural aid.

It would seem, therefore, from the opprobrium which followed the incorrect singer, from the institution of an office for the preservation of songs, and from the strict requirements of the priesthood, that there was a definite purpose in the tribe to perpetuate its music inviolate.

UNISON SINGING.

Men possessed of musical voices, and endowed with retentive memories, took pride in accuracy of singing. Such men were paid for their services, often making a good living by their talents. They frequently had at their command several hundred tribal songs,—for the number of native melodies was always very large,—and they were the music teachers, so to speak.

Musical contests, if we may so designate them, sometimes took place between the singers of one tribe and those of another, or between the public singers of the same tribe. For instance, a new song would be sung, as a sort of challenge, and whoever could repeat it accurately after hearing it the fewest number of times was accounted as gifted with the best musical memory. Instances are known to the writer where a man learned correctly a song after hearing it but once. Such men became candidates for places of musical honor.

When two or more persons took part in a song, the voices were always in unison. In their different qualities of bass, baritone, and tenor, contralto, mezzo-soprano, and soprano, they moved along in a consonance of two and sometimes three octaves, thus bringing out harmonic effects, and making one aware of "over-tones."

The habit of listening to unison singing seems to have trained the Indian ear to certain requirements in the rendition of his songs upon our instruments. To ascertain the nature of these requirements has been a long and difficult task.

EXPERIMENTS WITH OUR INSTRUMENTS.

Although all Indian songs are simple arias, without concerted parts, yet, when the writer played one of these melodies upon the piano, without any supporting notes, the Indian failed to recognize the familiar tune. In the first instance, their ears were filled with the sound of the mechanism of the instrument; the beating of the hammers of the piano upon the strings so broke up the melody as to produce the effect of mere noise. Less difficulty attended the rendition of a song upon the violin, or 'cello; but even on these, so rich in over-tones, the melody was blurred by the sound of the scraping of the bow. Numerous experiments made it evident that, before the Indian could be made to hear the music of our instruments, his ear must be trained to ignore their mechanical sounds. This was accomplished by accompanying the instrument with the voice, and inducing the Indian to join in the singing; thus his ear, hitherto accustomed to the portamento which permits no break between the notes of a melody, was gradually taught to connect the distinct and separate tones of the instrument, and to catch above its noise the familiar cadences of his song.

These experiments were most interesting in themselves; they revealed in a striking manner the difficulties more or less great which beset all persons when hearing a strange instrument for the first time; but they did not fully explain why the Indians, after they had become accustomed to the piano, declared that their songs did not sound natural when played exactly as they had been sung; that is, as an unsupported aria. For a year or more the writer struggled to ascertain the cause of this dissatisfaction, to find out why each song was declared to be correct, but lacking in naturalness.

It was true that the unsupported aria did not bring to the writer the musical picture of the song as she had heard it given in unison by the Indian singers; her ear unconsciously demanded a few simple chords to sustain the aria, not to modify it, or in any way change it. One day she so played a choral of the *Wa-wan* ceremony to her Indian friends, who at once asked, "Why have you not played it that way before? Now it sounds natural!"

The discovery of the Indian's appreciation of harmony was as unexpected as it was surprising, and led to many experiments among the people, in which Professor Fillmore took part, and it also stimulated a more extended examination of the songs themselves.

INDIAN SONGS AND HARMONY.

This examination had two results: First, it determined the manner of the presentation of the songs in the monograph; they were

printed as the Indian recognized and approved them when played upon an instrument. The upper line of the score always represents the aria exactly as it was sung ; the lower lines the added harmony, which was the particular harmonization preferred by the Indians. The music has not been published in this manner for the purpose of dressing up the melodies, or for the importation into them of any of our own notions ; but the songs were the songs of the Indians, and it was deemed proper to print the instrumental rendition of them in the manner the Indians approved.

Second : The harmonization so especially insisted upon by the Indians helped to lay bare the structure of the songs, which were found to be built along harmonic lines,—a startling discovery, because we are accustomed to regard harmony as a development of culture music, and not as fundamental to musical expression.

Dr. Richard Wallascheck of the University of Vienna, referring to this discovery, writes : “I do not share the not unfrequent opinion that a sense of melody arose first by itself, and that to this, later on, a sense of harmony was added ; for I do not think that any one can appreciate melody, as melody, if one has not some slight harmonic sense. The tones would, so to speak, diverge instead of forming a connected group.”

A large number of Indian songs lie along the line of the pentatonic scale, one of the simplest known, composed of the major tones within the octave, with the fourth and seventh omitted, giving the tonic chord, the first, third and fifth, the second and sixth, serving as by-tones. Indian songs, however, present examples of many other scales of the pure and mixed form of our minor scale, while some of the songs cannot be reduced to any known scale, because of the introduction of chromatic tones. These tones, however, can be accounted for on harmonic grounds.

It would occupy too much time and lead into too many technicalities should we enter upon the details which have proved the harmonic structure of the songs, the use of implied modulation, and the existence of harmonic relations, some of which are noted peculiarities of the modern romantic school. Uncertain as the Indian's tones often were in singing, there was no uncertainty in his intentions. If he meant to sing a major third, and you should play the chord of the minor third, he would at once tell you you were wrong ; and, as Professor Fillmore has remarked, the longer you worked with him, the more convinced you would be that he had a definite ideal of his song, however far he might fall short of it in his execution. His use of harmonic relations was not haphazard.

RHYTHM.

Rhythm, one of the first æsthetic elements of music to be developed, appears in Indian songs in a marked degree. Many of them are accompanied by movements of the body, so that the eye as well as the ear is arrested by the strongly accentuated rhythm. Nor is the rhythm simple ; it is quite common to hear two drum-beats played against three equal notes or their value, with elaborate and complicated syncopation crossing the drum-beats. Our modern music presents no greater rhythmic difficulties. Rhythm is also expressed in phrasing, in the grouping of measures into phrases and clauses, and in correlating them into periods.

FORM.

It would seem that the development of song into artistic form had begun, for we find in each of these Indian songs a motive, and this motive modified and repeated so as to give variety, but the intellectual control of emotion is yet too feeble to permit of an objective treatment of the theme. The close observation of years has confirmed what these songs had suggested, that the Indian is absorbed in the response of his music to his own mood, rather than in any intellectual enjoyment of the composition, or with any concern as to the effect to be produced. His song is subjective in its cause and in its effect ; he seems to have sung from the simple impulse to voice his aspirations, his joys and his sorrows, that could in no other way find utterance. The untutored song was the close-fitting garb of emotion, betraying its outlines with undisguised truthfulness. Indian songs, therefore, offer strong evidence that musical expression is a necessity in the nature of man, is the spontaneous utterance of feeling that lies outside the province of words.

INDIAN LIFE PERVADED BY MUSIC.

It is no mere metaphor to say that music enveloped the Indian's individual and social life like an atmosphere, for there was no important personal experience where it did not bear a part, nor was there any ceremonial where it was not essential to the expression of religious feeling. It was through music that the man reached out to come in touch with his fellow beings, and through music, as through a medium, he communicated with those mysterious powers which he believed to have control of all nature, as well as of the destiny of man. Thus the songs of the tribe were coextensive with the life of the people.

THE TRIBAL PRAYER.

According to the Indian's idea, the child during its infancy remained a part of its parents, with no distinctive existence, as it were. When it could walk alone, at about three years of age, it was initiated into the tribal organization through certain religious rites, but its responsible individual existence did not begin until puberty was reached, when its mind, as the Indians say, had "become white." This expression was in reference to the dawn, to the passing of night into day, and represented the coming of the child out of the period when nothing was clearly apprehended, into a time when he could readily recall past events with distinctness of detail. This seeming mastery of the minutiae of passing occurrences indicated that a stage of growth had been reached where the youth could be inducted into the religious mysteries through a distinct personal experience acquired in the *Non'-zhin-zhon*, a rite which brought the youth into what was believed to be direct communication with the supernatural powers.

In preparation for this rite, the youth was taught the one tribal prayer. He was to sing it during the four nights and days while keeping his vigil in some lonely place. As he left his home his parents put clay upon his head; and to teach him self-control they placed a bow and arrows in his hand, with the injunction not to use them, no matter how great his hunger, during his long fast. He was bidden to weep as he sang the prayer, and to wipe his tears with the palms of his hands, to lift his wet hands to heaven, and then lay them upon the earth. With those instructions the youth departed to enter upon the trial of his endurance. When at last he fell into a sleep or trance, and the vision came of bird, or animal, or cloud, bringing with it a cadence, this song became ever after the medium of communication between the man and the mysterious power typified in his vision, by which he summoned help and strength in the hour of his need. In this manner all Mystery songs originated, — the songs sung when healing plants were gathered, and when the medicine was administered; when a man set his traps, or hunted for game; when he desired to look into the future, or sought supernatural guidance or deliverance from impending danger.

The tribal prayer was called *Wa-kon'-da gi-kon*. *Wa-kon'-da*, the powers which could make or bring to pass; *gi-kon*, to weep from conscious insufficiency, or the longing for something that could bring happiness or prosperity. The words of the prayer, *Wa-kon'-da dhe-dhu wah-pa'-dhiñ a-ton'-he*, literally rendered, are, *Wa-kon'-da* (here needy he stands, and I am he.) This prayer is very old; its supplicating cadences echoed through the forests of this land long before our race had touched its shores.

OMAHA PRAYER.

The musical score for 'OMAHA PRAYER' consists of two systems. Each system has a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is in the bass staff. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The first system ends with a repeat sign, and the second system ends with a double bar line.

Wa - kon - da dhe - dhu wa - pa - dhi - a - ton - he.

Wa - kon - da dhe - dhu wa - pa - dhi - a - ton - he.

SERIOUSNESS A FACTOR IN INDIAN MUSIC.

The Indian's ever-present consciousness of the mysterious forces which encompassed him dominated his religious ceremonies, his habits, and his customs. He undertook nothing without first appealing to the unseen powers. He planted, he hunted, he fashioned his tools, and he decorated his wares with accompanying ceremonials which recognized that there were other factors, beside his own right hand, necessary to bring him success. The realization of a supernatural environment, and the belief that music was the medium of communication between man and the unseen world, gave to his songs a gravity which is so marked a characteristic of them.

WAR SONGS.

One might naturally expect seriousness in the music of the sacred rituals, but would listen for stirring strains in a war song, yet here we find present the same sober element, the consciousness that war brings death and the supernatural world near to man.

In the following old war song the words are few, and eked out by vocables. Few as they are they convey to the Omaha the picture of the warrior who, when he reached his place in the battle-line, shouts forth his cry, a cry that, in invoking the aid of the unseen powers, shall send terror to the heart of the enemy:—

WAR SONG.

♩ = 84.

Rhythm of the Drum.

TRANSLATION.

When I come to my place, I shout,
 When I come to my place, I shout,
 Ah e dhe dha e dhe he dhe!
 I command as I stand, and shout,
 E dhe dha e dhe he dhe!

It will be noticed that breathing vocables carry the voice in the cry to the Powers. This spirit of invocation pervades nearly all the war songs; exceptions are found in the songs of triumph, which are sung on the return of the warriors, not by themselves, however, but by others who thus vaunt the victories of battle.

The words in the following triumph song are addressed to the defeated enemy. They remind him that of all the tribes the Omahas alone are valiant, and whoso would emulate their bravery must weep for his slain. The music is the accompaniment to the dance of victory:—

TRIUMPH SONG. (Dance Measure.)

Con. Ped.



NOTE. — This is one of the songs mentioned as offering proof of accuracy of transmission.

All the acts of the warrior were set to music: there were songs sung by them when starting upon a warlike expedition, or when circling the village to ward off the attacks of enemies; and there were those chanted in the face of danger, or sung by the leader to nerve his men to valorous deeds.

A class of songs was composed and sung by women to inspirit the men as they went forth to battle. At the close of such songs the singer would imitate the cry of the bird-hawk, one of the birds sacred to Thunder. This cry is omitted in the notation of the song here given, as it could not be accurately represented. This song is transcribed from the graphophone, the pitch being that of the singer. It begins in B minor and modulates into D major, and swings back to the minor.

RALLYING SONG. (Composed and Sung by Women.)

M. M. ♩ = 44.





Of the *We-ton wa-an*, or telepathic songs, to which reference has been made, the following is an example :—

WE-TON WA-AN.



LOVE SONGS.

Love songs are scantily supplied with words, but abound with breathing vocables, and are sung by the men in honorable courtship.

LOVE SONG.



SACRED SONGS.

The class of sacred songs is very large, and covers a wide range. It includes all rituals which accompany the numerous ceremonials of the tribe, the songs connected with the peaceful avocations, as the planting of corn, the quest of food and pelts, and the great tribal festivals of thanksgiving. There were also individual sacred songs, those connected with the vision, and others expressive of religious fervor, or associated with vows made to the supernatural powers.

The following was composed by a woman to whom the Thunder had spoken in a vision. To this god she had promised to give her first-born child. When she became a mother, she forgot in her joy that the life of her little child did not belong to her; nor did she recall her fateful vow until one bright spring day when the clouds gathered, and she heard the roll of the Thunder, — a sound which summoned all persons consecrated to these gods to bring their offerings and to pay their vows. She remembered what she had pro-

mised ; but her heart forbade her to lay the infant, which was smiling in her arms, upon the cloud-swept hilltop. She pressed the baby to her breast, and waited in silence the passing of the gods in the storm. The following spring, when the first thunder pealed, she did not forget her vow, but she could not gather strength to fulfil it. Another year passed and again the Thunder sounded. Taking the toddling child by the hand, the mother climbed the hill, and when the top was reached she placed it on the ground and fled. But the boy scrambled up and ran after her, and his frightened cry stayed her feet. He caught her garments and clung to them, and although the Thunder called, she could not obey ; her vow had been made before she knew the strength of a mother's love. Gathering the boy within her arms, she hid herself and it from the presence of the gods. The storm passed, and the mother and child returned to the lodge, but fear had taken possession of her ; she watched her son with eyes in which terror and love struggled for the mastery. One day as the little one played beside a rippling brook, laughing and singing in his glee, suddenly the clouds gathered, the flashing lightning and the crashing thunder sent beast and bird to cover, and drove the mother out to find her child. She heard his voice above the fury of the storm calling to her. As she neared the brook, a vivid flash blinded her eyes ; for a moment she was stunned, but recovering she pushed on, only to be appalled by the sight that met her gaze. Her boy lay dead, struck by the Thunder gods, who had claimed their own. No other children came to lighten the sorrow of the lonely woman, but every spring when the first thunder sounded, and whenever the storm swept the land, this stricken mother climbed the hills, and there, standing alone, with hands uplifted to the black rolling clouds, she sang her song of sorrow and fealty. Many years ago the writer met her and heard her song ; she was an old, old woman ; she is now at rest, and let us hope that her lifelong sorrow has turned to joy. The words of her song express her fidelity, and the music betrays her love and sorrow :—

THE MOTHER'S VOW TO THE THUNDER GODS.

Slow and flowing.





TRANSLATION.

Flying, flying, sweeping, swirling,
 They return, the Thunder gods.
 To me they come, to me their own:
 Me they behold, who am their own!
 On wings they come, —
 Flying, flying, sweeping, swirling,
 They return, the Thunder gods.

SOCIAL SONGS.

The social gatherings of the people were generally in connection with the meetings of the religious and secular societies. All of these had their peculiar songs, the singing of which always formed a part of their various ceremonies. Dancing was not recreative, as it has become with us, but was more or less dramatic, and the bodily movements accentuated the rhythm of the song.

One of the best known of the secular societies was the He'-dhuska, composed entirely of warriors. An account of this society was given in vol. v., No. xvii., of the Folk-Lore Journal. The music of this and other kindred societies covers too wide a range for the limits of this paper. Aside from the interest of the music itself, the words and traditions preserved with the songs not only throw light upon the people's beliefs and habits of thought, but record many striking events in the history of the tribe.

Limitation of time prevents an exposition of the music of the Calumet ceremony, a ceremony which once held sway over the whole Mississippi valley. It was the presence of one of these Calumets in his canoe that made it possible for Marquette to penetrate that vast and unknown region. The ritual songs of this ceremony are replete with valuable suggestions to the musician, as well as to the student of ceremonials. Some of the chorals express deep religious feeling, as the following will illustrate:—

CHORAL. (Calumet Ceremony.)



This song was sung immediately after the Calumets had been ceremonially raised from their resting-place. The bearers turned, facing the people, who were seated against the wall of the lodge, and waving the Pipes over the heads of the multitude to the rhythm of the song. As the Pipes passed slowly by, the people took up the choral, until at last the great lodge resounded with the majestic cadences.

The writer could never hear unmoved this pæan of praise for the blessing of peace and fellowship among men. The leaping flames from the central fire lit up the faces of the hundreds of men and women gathered there, while on the glistening roof the swaying feathers of the Pipes cast great wing-like shadows, and seemed to make real the symbolic presence of the mighty eagle himself, as, circling over the people, he sped on his mission, bearing the blessing of good-will among men.

The music of this choral clearly reveals the harmonic structure of Indian songs. The printed chords are those chosen by the Indians themselves after numerous experiments.¹

¹ Professor Fillmore's analysis of this choral on page 65 of the Monograph on Omaha Music is worthy of attention.

As we close this brief sketch of aboriginal music, we turn with the Indian to his native forests, where his untutored songs had their birth ; there, lingering beside him, we listen to his voiceful reverie, through which vibrate the responsive echoes of primeval nature :—

REVERIE: IN THE FOREST.

With expression.

Con Ped.

Alice C. Fletcher.